

What God's Grace is Not, Part 2 - Romans 6:3-11 – January 8th, 2012

- Today's teaching here in Romans chapter six is part two of a new series we began last week titled; "What God's Grace is Not."
- You'll forgive my unusual and even unconventional title but there's a reason I chose to tackle this particular text by addressing what grace is not.
- Sometimes, it becomes necessary in our understanding of God's Word to first deal with the common misunderstandings about God's Word.

- This is certainly the case as it relates to God's Grace, in that we have no hope of understanding what grace is, until we know what grace is not.
- Perhaps a better way to say it is, we must "unlearn," as a must to "learn," that which God would have us to know about how His grace works.
- This explains why Paul rhetorically asks such astonishing questions in chapter 6. It seems the Holy Spirit has him now expound on chapter 5:20.

Romans 5:20 NIV The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more,

- It's this verse, and verses like this, that have been the source of much misunderstanding amongst many a believer because of what it implies.
- The implication is that I can continue on in my sin, because where my sin increases, God's grace increases all the more. That's not God's grace.
- This is why the Apostle Paul tells the Christians in Rome what God's grace is not, beginning here in verse one where we identified our first one.

1. It's not a license to sin (Verse 1)

-v1 The Apostle Paul asks the question of whether or not we can continue living in habitual sin in order that grace may increase proportionately.

2. It's not conducive to sin (Verse 2)

- v2 Paul answers the question in verse one saying; "by no means shall we go on sinning that grace may increase because we are dead to sin.
- As we'll see next in verse three, Paul will begin to fill in the blanks, as it were, by answering the question; "how can we live in sin any longer?"
- Before we pick it up with our third one, it's important to understand that continuing with the old life of habitual sin is an impossibility under grace.

3. It's not alive to sin (Verses 3-5)

(3) Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? (4) We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. (5) If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.

- v3-4 Paul brings into the discussion, our baptism into Christ, and into His death, burial and resurrection that we too may live a new life in Christ.
- v5 He then says how that, if we've been united with Christ in His death, we will certainly also be united with Christ in His resurrection as well.
- This is interesting for a number of reasons not the least of which is that it further reinforces that continuing on in sin, is an impossibility in Christ.

- In other words, it's as much of an impossibility for a true believer to continue in sin as it would be for a deceased person to continue on living.
- Notice the imagery that the Apostle Paul uses when he likens this to our baptism into Christ. He does this because of the symbolism of baptism.
- Being immersed in water pictures our death and burial, and being brought up out of the water pictures our uniting with Him in His resurrection.

- Not only are we uniting with Jesus Christ, so too are we identifying with Jesus Christ, thus it's an outward declaration of our inward salvation.
- While water baptism is not necessary for one's salvation, it will be the outward expression of one's salvation, by virtue of the public identification.
- As a born again believer, I will have new life in Christ, and the old life, and the sinful lifestyle with it, have all passed away, or died, if you prefer.

2 Corinthians 5:17 NKJV (17) Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

William Newell in his commentary on the book of Romans writes about how; "A missionary was questioning a converted Bechuana as to the meaning of a passage analogous to Romans 6:5, ...The Bechuana said to him: "Soon I shall be dead, and they will bury me in my field. My flocks will come to pasture above me. But I shall no longer hear them, and I shall not come forth from my tomb to take them and carry them with me to the sepulchre. They will be strange to me, as I to them. Such is the image of my life in the midst of the world since I believed in Christ."

Charles Spurgeon – "We are one with Jesus, being both dead with Him, and risen in Him; ours therefore it is to live the new life, and view ourselves as dead to all the sinful joys of our former lives. Oh for grace to carry this out to the full."

4. It's not a ticket to sinlessness (Verses 6-11)

(6) For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— (7) because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. (8) Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. (9) For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. (10) The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. (11) In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

- v6-7 Paul says we know our old self was crucified with Christ, and so too is the body of sin, so we're no longer slaves to sin, but freed from sin.
- v8-9 He says if we've died with Christ, we'll believe that we'll also live with Christ, since Christ was raised from the dead, and can't die again.
- v10-11 He says we count ourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ because Christ's death was to sin once for all but Christ's life is to God.
- When Paul says the old self is done away with is where unlearning what's not being said, before learning what is being said, comes into play.

- These verses do not mean our proclivity to sin is done away with rather, what it does mean is our body of sin has been "rendered powerless."
- However, just because the old self has been put to death and rendered powerless, doesn't mean that I am now able to live a life of sinlessness.
- Here's why; though the old self has already been crucified, by God, with Christ on the cross, I still have in my body of sin ability to give in to sin.

- I'll close with an illustration that can hopefully make some sense out of this. I have in my hand a wadded up piece of paper that I'll now let go of.
- We know that as my hand has "done away with" the wadded paper, the power of gravity has taken over, which is why it has fallen to the ground.
- In effect, the power of the grip in my hand has been "rendered powerless," but I still have the ability to reach down and pick up the wad of paper.

- So too is this true with sin. The old self has been down away with in as much as I don't give in to it, and the ability to be again enslaved by it.
- Maybe a better way to say it would be that; "It's not that I will be sinless, it's now that I will sin less." This is because it's rendered powerless.
- Actually, this becomes a litmus test of sorts, in that my growing in grace will be evidenced by how I sin less. God's grace is more, thus I sin less.